

The planning of ESUG, SUME & Anatrack Ltd for naturalliance2.

Background

Through two European Union projects, the European Sustainable Use Group (then a regional Sustainable Use Specialist Group within IUCN) designed approaches and software for working with local communities, in their own languages, to encourage conservation through sustainable use of species and ecosystems. After building www.naturalliance.eu as a 23-language example, ESUG was commissioned in 2014 by UNEP's Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species and the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) to create www.sakernet.org for species conservation. IAF then proposed www.perdixnet.org, which uses a flagship species to conserve farmland ecosystems. The Perdixnet multilingual hub has culture-specific links to national satellite sites in the chosen languages, so that globally (or regionally) accepted principles can be combined with diverse national laws and cultural interests: compare different approaches on <http://perdix-de.sycl.net> and <http://perdix-uk.sycl.net>.

IUCN's Commission on Ecosystem Management recognised that the network software has potential to be a powerful global-with-local tool for conservation. CEM therefore agreed during in 2012-16 to host a group for Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems. SUME aims to extend the system for networking worldwide and now has some 500 members in about 100 countries. ESUG provides administrative support for the group, and the software is built by Anatrack Ltd., a company spun from UK government research in 2000. Anatrack, which joined with ESU(S)G in the last EU project, has a licensing and support agreement with UK's Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust to ensure that this social media system cannot be sold commercially.

The next step

ESUG and SUME leadership has agreed to create a global network to explain, in 40 or so major languages, how hunting, fishing, gathering and other use of wild species benefit conservation. Work with groups representing these activities would use satellite sites in each land to spread:

- good practise, and encouragement for sustainable use projects, to local communities;
- good news of successes, via social and other media, to governments and electorates.

Implementation

Beyond voluntary administration, the costs of such work are for setting up and hosting the hub, for translating the hub, for national satellite sites and for meetings to train use of satellite sites. In 2017 Anatrack agreed to waive a €5,000 set-up fee and delay the €2,000 annual maintenance fee until 2020¹. Initial costs, for content transfer to a new hub template and for translation, will be part of the budget for a SUME/ESUG spring 2019 meeting in Croatia. Cost of an array of global satellite sites (€99 each p.a.), translation and training would eventually be €5-10,000 p.a.²

Members of ESUG (and SUME) pay no fees, although ESUG statutes permit subscriptions. Early in 2018, ESUG Committee agreed that contribution by organisations of at least €500 pa should warrant enrolment under Article 6, with inscription on <http://esug.sycl.net> as a Patron. Two ESUG members and two organisations have agreed to become Patrons, thereby helping to raise the €5,000 p.a. for a naturalliance2 which will launch with at least 4 national language sites in 2019.

¹ Without eventual fees, Anatrack cannot maintain improvements needed to support evolution of the main browsers and operating systems (currently from Apple, Firefox, Google and Microsoft).

² Depending on rate of roll-out to new countries, which depends on volunteer effort.